



# *Town of Darien*

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## It is TICK TIME..... Some PREVENTION TIPS.....SPRING, 2010

LYME DISEASE is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* which is carried by certain ticks. The ticks pick up the bacteria when they bite mice or deer infected with Lyme disease. You get the disease if you are bitten by an infected tick.

With the warm weather of late, we are seeing an EMERGENCE of TICKS. Ticks do not jump, fly, or drop from trees. They are found on tips of grass, low bushes, leaf litter, and ornamental ground cover in shaded areas and in the woods. On lawns, most ticks are found within nine feet of the woods. They are usually not found in sunny areas. Ticks are most active in LATE SPRING-EARLY SUMMER.

RISK FACTORS for Lyme disease include: having a pet that may carry ticks home, engaging in activities that increase tick exposure such as gardening, hunting or hiking, and walking in tall grass.

PREVENTION is KEY in avoiding a tick bite. When outdoor activities occur in wooded or grassy areas take these precautions: 1) Use a bug spray with the chemical DEET to repel ticks. Spray it right on your exposed skin (outside), but not on your face or any irritated areas. 2) Wear light colored clothing to make it easier to spot ticks. 3) Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants with the cuffs tucked into shoes or socks. 4) Wear high boots, preferably rubber. 5) Wear a hat.

CHECK YOURSELF for ticks after any outdoor activity. Ticks that carry Lyme are so small (about the size of a pinhead) that they are very hard to see. Once home, remove and wash your clothes and thoroughly inspect all skin surface areas including your scalp. Shower immediately and/ or wash exposed areas. This applies to your CHILDREN too. CHECK your PETS for ticks after they have been outside. You can't get Lyme disease from your pet, but your pet can bring infected ticks inside. These ticks can fall off your pet and attach to you.

REMOVE ticks as soon as you notice them. Most people who are bitten by a tick do NOT get Lyme disease. Infected ticks usually do not spread Lyme disease until they have been attached for AT LEAST 24 to 36 hours. The Darien Health Department does accept ticks and sends them to the Connecticut Agricultural Station. So if you have found a tick that has been attached to your skin or that of a family member, you can bring it in for testing. This may be helpful in determining what treatment, if any, you may need.

Remember, Lyme Disease can be crippling – those who haven't had it, don't think about it. Those who have had it, think of nothing else. So be vigilant!